DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 361 862 EA 025 239

AUTHOR Chen, Michael; Addi, Audrey
TITLE Employment Threat, Equality of Opportunities and Educators' Response to the Rapid Feminization of School Principalship.
PUB DATE Apr 93
NOTE 17p.; Preliminary version of a paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Atlanta, GA, April 12-16, 1993).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Research/Technical (143)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Administration; Educational Attainment; Elementary Secondary Education; *Equal Opportunities (Jobs); *Females; Foreign Countries; Social Change; *Women Administrators
IDENTIFIERS *Israel

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the responses of men and women in the Israeli educational system toward the rapid feminization of school administration. Two theoretical perspectives--the "enlightened" approach and conflict theory--provide a framework for understanding the responses. Data were obtained from the responses to a questionnaire of 156 graduates of several degree and diploma courses in educational administration. Findings support the conflict approach, which states that gender and gender-associated interests have a stronger influence on attitudes toward the process of feminization than do education, position, or educational values. Men perceived feminization as a threat to their occupation more than women did. Men also described themselves as gatekeepers protecting the status of their profession from depreciation; they were less supportive than women of equal employment opportunities. Although women also reported feeling threatened by feminization of educational administration, they were much more supportive of equal occupational opportunities in school administration, especially if they were administrators themselves. Finally, as predicted by the "enlightened" approach, education had a moderating influence on the perception of feminization as a threat. Four tables are included. (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 361 862

EMPLOYMENT THREAT, EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITIES AND EDUCATORS' RESPONSE TO THE RAPID FEMINIZATION OF SCHOOL PRINCIPALSHIP

Michael Chen and Audrey Addi

Tel Aviv University

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), Atlanta, GA, USA - April 1993.

A preliminary version. Please, do not quote.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

- This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
- Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

M. Chen

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)"

EA025239

The Rapid Feminization of School Administration in Israel

This paper examines the responses of men and women in the Israeli educational system towards the rapid process of feminization of school administration. The issue under study is whether they see this process as a threat to their job status, security and salary, or as an opportunity to equalize female employment opportunities in educational administration to those of males.

Until the 1970's, most of the administrative positions in the educational system in Israel were held by men, and school administration was considered a male occupation. Men tend to aspire to obtain administrative positions more than women in the educational system. More men than women perceive administrative positions as their main job, which they believe must be done according to the standards of male leadership. To a great extent, these attitudes result from patriarchal norms claiming that men persist and succeed in administrative positions more than women (Izraeli, 1982).

During the last few years, there has been a steady increase in the number and percentage women in administrative positions in schools. Today, 60% of the elementary school principals in Israel are female compared with 20% in 1972.

This process is combined with a general improvement of the levels of education and training of school principals (Addi & Chen, 1993): In 1989 42% of the elementary school principals had an academic degree, compared with only 34% in 1986.

It appears that the occupational status and prestige of school administration is influenced more by the feminization processes than by the rising levels of education (Addi, 1992). The entrance of women into administrative position, lowers the status of such jobholders even if they are well educated and trained and even if they perform their tasks very well.

Reskin and Ross (1992a) reported that females enter occupations that are already losing their status. Moreover, the feminization of such jobs accelerates their declining status.

The feminization of administrative positions is often accompanied by reducing these positions' authority as well as by a decrease in salary (Jacobs, 1992; Reskin & Ross, 1992b;

England & Herbert, 1993; Goldring & Chen, 1993). It is plausible that the decrease in status and in rewards of these positions threatens both male and female job holders. There is no information on how workers in positions which undergo feminization processes react to this situation and whether there is a difference between the reactions of men and women to the threat of decreasing status and rewards.

Theoretical Approach

This study examines the responses to the feminization process through two theoretical viewpoints: the "enlightened" approach and the conflict approach. The first approach emphasizes the role of values in public affairs. It assumes that liberal value orientations influence decisions about the labor market and sets equal employment opportunities as an important factor. This approach focuses on human capital factors and claims that the more educated people of both sexes who favor social equality will usually support occupational feminization, particularly in high status jobs. In contrast, less educated people, and those holding more traditional and conservative attitudes, will stress the stereotypical division between the sexes and will oppose feminization (Thornton, Alwin & Camburn, 1983). Several opinion polls have furnished empirical support to this approach (Simon & Landis, 1989; Goode, 1982).

Goode (1982) reports that several surveys in the fields of politics, law, and labor market have shown only few gender differences concerning equal opportunities for women. Differences were more prominent between different ages and levels of education. Moreover, the support for equal occupational opportunities for women has been on the increase since the 50's (Simon & Landis, 1989). At the same time the educational level of the total population, and especially of women (Wilson, 1991) went up. The effect of education on attitudes concerning equality of occupational opportunities is so strong that men with high education tend to support it even more than women of the same educational level, and more than less educated men (Andrew & Walters, 1981).

The second approach to the issue of the feminization of school administration is the conflict point of view. According to this approach, the feminization hurts the interests of many men, as well as those of women who have already attained positions of power and status in male dominated occupations. Men who are hurt by the feminization process are likely to argue that women's entrance into the labor force in general, and into male dominated occupations in particular, undermines the effective division of labor in society and threatens the position of men as the dominant and controlling group in society (Davis & Robinson, 1991). On these lines, it can be supposed that in order to guard the status of their occupations, men should guard the entrance of women into their 'occupation' by increasing the obstacles for women to attain these positions (Reskin, 1988). Therefore, it is expected that they will not support equality between the sexes in the educational system.

This tendency was found among white males (Kane, 1992) and in various sectors of the labor market. Dorsey (1992) reports that in the university, males do not support female promotion to administrative positions. Reskin (1988) indicates male resistance against women's having access to male-dominated occupations in imposing barriers for promotion such as high qualification, defining new promotion rules or weakening affirmative action demands. These strong and often invisible barriers are sometimes regarded as a "glass roof" that seriously restricts female promotion.

The same tendency may be found in a predominantly female occupation such as teaching, where males are perceived as a token group (Chen & Addi, 1992). These "token" males try to keep their relative status by holding administrative positions. Women's entrance to those positions may thus pose a threat to them.

So far, there is no evidence that women in powerful positions encourage women to join the work force. Despite this, minority women who are barred from equal employment tend to support equal opportunity employment more than men (Davis & Robinson, 1992). Izraeli (1990) reported that working women fight for their positions by themselves. Kanter (1977) claims that the working conditions of women in administrative positions are so harsh, especially in a male work

place, that they are forced to assume masculine behaviors and dissociate from other women. Shakeshaft (1987) also reports that women principals do not tend to support female candidates for principalship more than men.

It is probable that different women will react positively or negatively to the possibility of entering administrative positions. Although women have an interest in increasing equality between the sexes, they know that feminization processes hurt their working conditions. Thus, it is possible that women who already hold administrative position will oppose feminization. Moreover, there are women who are reluctant towards the feminization of administrative positions as such. They prefer to work under the supervision of men rather than women (Simon & Landis, 1989). Moreover, women who are the second breadwinner tend to be less supportive of gender equality than women who have to support themselves (Gerson, 1987). They prefer to preserve their own status and role in the family, as well as the status of their spouses as primary breadwinners (Gerson, 1987). However, women who boasted in the past that their husbands had a prestigious and high income occupation as school principals, can no longer be proud of this anymore. It is doubtful whether the present husband's income and status is sufficient to sustain the family at present.

In conclusion, men and women both support and oppose the feminization process. According to the "enlightened" approach, human capital factors (such as education) provide the main explanation of attitude towards the feminization process and equal opportunity employment, while gender is of secondary importance. According to the conflict approach, there will be significant differences between men and women as well as between holders and nonholders of administrative positions in their attitudes toward the feminization process and its results.

The Course of Research and Research Variables

One hundred and fifty-six graduates of several degree and diploma courses in educational administration responded to a questionnaire of 200 items, 7 of which dealt with the feminization of educational administration. Two research indices were developed based on factor analysis. The

first is perception of feminization as a threat to the status of the occupation. This index is composed of the average of three items, such as: The feminization of administration leads to a rapid decline in the prestige of education (Cronbach's alpha =.56). The second index refers to the support of equal occupational employment for women in administrative positions, and is composed of the average of three items, such as: In administrative positions, preference should be given to efficient men even if they have no teaching experience (Cronbach's alpha =.57). The indices ranged from 1- oppose, to 7- absolutely agree.

The four additional research variables include three biographical items and an attitude scale: a) Average parental education as measured in years; b) Seniority in teaching and in administration; c) Position at school (1. Principal/vice-principal, 2. Other position, 3. Teacher); d) Support of equal educational opportunity in society at large (average of three items; the index ranges from 1- not at all, to 7- absolutely agree).

Research Findings

Table 1 refers to the averages of all the respondents' perceptions concerning feminization as a threat and equal opportunity employment in administrative positions. The finding indicates that there is support for equal occupational opportunity ($\bar{X}$ = 4.84) and a lower perception of feminization as a factor threatening the occupational status of the principal's position ($\bar{X}$ = 2.92. Analyzing responses gender, yielded significant differences in both indices, as expected according to the conflict approach. Women support equal opportunity employment in administrative positions more than men ($\bar{X}$ - 5.29 as against $\bar{X}$ = 3.85). Similarly, more men than women feel the feminization process significantly threatens their occupational status ($\bar{X}$ = 3.72 as against $\bar{X}$ = 2.55).

Table 2 relates to differences between gender in the independent variables. It appears that the level of parents' education is significantly higher for women than for men. On the average, women in educational administration come from a more established socio-economic background than men. No significant differences were found between men and women for the other variables.

Table 3 presents the correlations between two research variables for men and women. For men, there is a significant and strong negative correlation (r = -.66) between support for equality of occupational opportunities in administrative positions and perception of feminization as a threat. The greater the support for these values, the smaller the perception of threat. A similar but smaller correlation was found among women (r = -.26). It must be noted that only among men was a negative and significant correlation was found between perceiving feminization as a threat and parents' education (r = -.42), as well as a positively significant correlation between parents' education and support for equal occupational opportunities. It appears that among men the more established their background, the more they support equality between gender and the less they fear the integration of women into management. Among women, no significant correlations were found between these variables. Womens' opinions on these subjects seem to be more homogeneous.

Table 4 presents the findings of multiple regression analysis concerning the perception of feminization as a threat. For all respondents, the analysis indicates that the research variables explain 21% of the variance of this variable. Gender was found to have the strongest effect (β = -.64). As the conflict approach assumes, men felt more threatened by feminization than women did. Similarly, it was confirmed once more that the higher the parents' educational level, the lower the sense of threat (β = -0.11), as predicted by "enlightened" approach. The other variables were not found to have any influence including attitudes supporting general educational opportunities. It seems, as Andrew and Walters (1981) put it, that "sex role attitudes (....) have become a more distinct sphere of opinion which is increasingly structured along traditional versus non-traditional lines" (p. 459).

The regression analysis of each gender separately indicated that among females there was no explanation of the variance of feminization as a threat scale. Among men, the only significant effect was of parents' education (β =-.16): the higher the parent's education, the smaller the threat posed by feminization.

Analysis of the regression on a scale of support for equal occupational opportunities indicated that more women than men support equality (β = -.78). In addition, there is a strong, significant, negative effect of feminization as a threat on the equal opportunity scale (β = -.45). All the variables explain 35% of the variance on the scale of equal occupational opportunities for women in school administrative positions. Separate analyses for men and women showed a difference in the magnitude of the effect of the threat perception on the attitude towards equal opportunities: for men (β = -.67) and for women (β = -.31). Similarly only among women the position at work was found to influence values of equality (β = -.34); women who hold administrative positions support improving women opportunities for administrative positions more than those who do not hold such positions.

Discussion and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of men and women towards the process of feminization of educational administration positions and towards giving women equal opportunities to integrate into these positions in schools. Two alternative approaches were tested and compared in this study: the conflict approach and the "enlightened" approach. The research findings support the conflict approach which states that gender and the interests associated with it, have a stronger influence on attitudes toward the process of feminization, compared with education, position or educational values. Men perceive feminization as a threat to their occupation more than women do. Moreover, it appears that men describe themselves as gatekeepers protecting the status of their professions from depreciation as a result of the rapid process of feminization. Similarly, they are less supportive than women of equal opportunities of employment. The sense of threat to the occupation as a result of feminization is apparent among women as well. However, women are much more supportive of equal occupational opportunities in administrative positions, especially if they hold such a position themselves. In addition, as the "enlightened" approach predicted, education has a moderating influence on the perception of feminization as a threat.

It appears that the research findings offer clear support for neither the conflict nor the "enlightened" points of view. Moreover, it is possible that these two points of view do not fully contradict one another as may easily be assumed. Perhaps, the conflict approach views the "enlightened" approach as one factor in the struggle between groups over control on important social resources - the school principal. Thus, the "enlightened" approach would be one of the ideologies which plays a role in the conflict between the sexes. According to the "enlightened" approach, on the other hand, the growing opposition of men to equal opportunities stems from their vested interest in their managerial authority. Their interests seem to distort their reasoning, as they approve of sexist prejudices in spite of their broad education. It is doubtful therefore, whether additional education would lead to a change of mind and a rebuttal of the claims that feminization is a threat. The findings of this study concur with the generally prevalent trends under the present conditions of labor market, where supporting principles of equal opportunity is not necessarily linked with gender desegregation and equality. There are stronger political, social and economic mechanisms which reinforce continuous occupational segregation between the sexes, even under the ideology of equality (Charles, 1992).

References

Addi, A. (1992). *Changes in the status of the teacher in the past twenty years.* Tel Aviv University, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, The Institute for Social Research, Report No. 10 (Hebrew).

Addi, A. & Chen, M. (1993). No just salary: The feminine image of teaching harms its prestige. *Hed - Ha'Hinuch, 67* (5), 22-23. (Hebrew).

Andrew, C. & Walters, P.B. (1981). Trends in US Men's and Women's sex-role attitudes: 1972-1978. *American Sociological Review, 46,* 453-460.

Charles, M. (1992). Cross-national variation in occupational sex-segregation. *American Sociological Review, 57* (4), 483-502.

Chen, M. & Addi, A. (1992). Principals' gender and the work orientation of male and female teachers. *Transformation, 3* (2), 5-14.

Davis, N.J. & Robinson, R.V. (1991). Men's and women's consciousness of gender inequality: Austria, West Germany, Great Britain and the United States. *American Sociological Review, 56*, (1), 72-83.

Dorsey, B.J. (1992). Attitudes toward academic careers for women in a patriarchal society: A comparative study of staff and student attitudes towards women academics at the University of Zimbabwe. Paper presented at the 8th World Congress of Comparative Education, Prague, Czechoslovakia.

England, P. & Herbert, M.S. (1993). The pay of men in "female" occupation: Is comparable worth only for women? In C.L. Williams (Ed.), *Crossing over: Men in women's occupation* (forthcoming).

Gerson, K. (1987). Emerging social division among women: Implication for welfare state politics. *Politics and Gender, 15* (2), 213-221.

Goldring, E. & Chen, M. (1993). The feminization of the principalship in Israel: The trade-off between political power and cooperative leadership. In P. Zdhiates and C. Marshall (Eds.), *New politics of race and gender*. Washington, DC and London (forthcoming).

Goode, W.J. (1982). Why men resist. In B. Thorne, and M. Yalom (Eds.), *Rethinking the family* (pp. 131-150). New York and London: Longman.

Izraeli, D. (1990). Women work, family and public policy. In A. Globerson, A. Galin and A. Rosenstein (Eds.), (pp. 245-278). *Human resources and labor relations in Israel.* Tel Aviv, Israel: Ramot.

Izraeli, D., Friedman, A., Schrieft, R., Raday, F. & Agassi, J.B. (Eds.) (1982). The double bind. Women in Israel. Hakibbutz Hameuchad.

Jacobs, J.A. (1992). Women's entry into management: Trends in earning, authority and values among salaried mangers. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 37,* 282-301.

Kane, E.W. (1992). Race, gender and attitudes toward gender stratification. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 55* (3), 311-320.

Kanter, R.S. (1977). *Men and women of the corporation.* New York: Basic Books Inc. Publishers.

Martin, P., Osmond, M., Hesselbart, S. and Wood, M. (1980). The significance of gender as a social and demographic correlate of sex role attitudes. *Sociological Focus, 13,* 383-396.

Reskin, B.F. (1988). Bringing the man back. In Sex differentiation and the devaluation of women's work. *Gender and Society, 2* (1), 58-81.

Reskin, B.F. & Ross, C.E. (1992a).

Reskin, B.F. & Ross, C.E. (1992b). Authority and earning among managers: The contributing significance of sex. *Work and Occupation, 19,* 342-365.

Shakeshaft, C. (1987). *Women in educational administration.* Newbury Park CA: Sage.

Simon, R.J. & Landis, J.M. (1989). Attitudes about a woman's place and role. *Opinion Quarterly, 53,* 265-276.

Thornton, A., Alwin, D.E. & Camburn, D. (1983). Causes and consequences of sex-role attitude change. *American Sociological Review, 48,* 211-227.

Wilson, M. (Ed.) (1991). *Girls and young women in education.* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Table 1: The Perception of Equal Occupational Opportunity and Threat of Feminization of Educational Administration Status by Gender (Averages and Standard Deviations)

		Women	Men	Total
Number		107	49	156
Support for equal occupational opportunity in administrative positions	$\bar{X}$	5.29	3.85	4.84*
	SD	(1.36)	(1.57)	(1.57)
Perception of feminization of educational administration as a threat	$\bar{X}$	2.55	3.72	2.92*
	SD	(1.19)	(1.59)	(1.44)

* $p<.001$

Table 2: Research Variables: Parents' Education, Seniority, Position at Work and Support for Equal Educational Opportunity: Differences between Women and Men.

		Women	Men	Total
Average number of years of parents' education	$\bar{X}$	11.18	7.15	9.92*
	SD	(2.80)	(4.01)	(3.72)
Seniority in teaching and administration	$\bar{X}$	20.17	21.36	20.55
	SD	(7.65)	(7.59)	(7.59)
Position at work	$\bar{X}$	1.69	1.61	1.67
	SD	(.87)	(.86)	(.87)
Support of equal educational opportunity in society at large	$\bar{X}$	4.04	3.96	4.02
	SD	(.76)	(.90)	(.80)

*p<.001

Table 3: Correlations Between Research Variables among Women (below the diagonal) and Men (above the diagonal).

	Men					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Support of equal occupational opportunities in administrative positions	-	-.66*	.25*	.08	-.02	-.04
2. Perception of feminization of administrative positions as a threat	-.26*	-	-.42*	-.02	-.06	.17
3. Parents' average number of education years	.15	-.12	-	-.15	.12	-.28*
4. Seniority in teaching and administration	-.04	.05	-.24*	-	-.26*	-.07
5. Position at work	-.15	-.14	-.02	-.32*	-	-.05
6. Support for equal opportunity education	-.05	.06	-.09	.03	-.13	-

Women

*p<.05

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analyses of Personal and Ideological Variables on Attitudes Regarding Feminization as a Threat and Equality of Employment Opportunity in the Entire Sample and for each Gender.

		Women (N=107)		Men (N=49)		Total (N=156)	
		Feminization as a threat	Occupational equality	Feminization as a threat	Occupational equality	Feminization as a threat	Occupational equality
Gender	β	-	-	-	-	-.74	.78*
	b	-	-	-	-	-.24*	.23
	(S.E.b)	-	-	-	-	(.261)	(.267)
Parents' Education	β	-.13	-.09	-.16*	.00	-.11*	.08
	b	-.05	-.05	-.41	.00	-.28	.03
	(S.E.b)	(.043)	(.047)	(.057)	(.051)	(.033)	(.035)
Seniority	β	-.02	-.07	-.08	.05	-.05	-.02
	b	-.01	-.01	-.018	.01	-.01	-.01
	(S.E.b)	(.016)	(.018)	(.030)	(.025)	(.015)	(.014)
Position at work	β	-.14	-.34*	-.03	-.05	-.10	-.26*
	b	-.19	-.21	-.06	-.09	-.17	-.15
	(S.E.b)	(.143)	(.157)	(.262)	(.21)	(.126)	(.127)
Support for equality of Educational Opportunity	β	.03	-.05	.04	.08	.05	-.00
	b	.05	-.09	.08	.14	.08	-.00
	(S.E.b)	(.155)	(.169)	(.252)	(.207)	(.132)	(.132)
Perception of feminization in administrative positions as a threat	β		-.27*		-.66*		-.45*
	b		-.31		-.67		-.41
	(S.E.b)		(.109)		(.123)		(.081)
Regression		3.36	6.28	5.09	5.64	5.40	5.03
R^2		.04	.12*	.18*	.44*	.21*	.35*

*p<.05